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# Panel of Nobel Laureates To Assess Bronx Science

## Curriculum and Faculty to Undergo Review

By ABBY GOODNOUGH

Schools Chancellor Harold O. Levy has appointed a "visiting committee" of Nobel laureates to evaluate the curriculum and faculty at the prestigious Bronx High School of Science, his alma mater.

The action comes months after Mr. Levy blocked the appointment of a popular administrator at the school to be its principal. Mr. Levy refused to appoint the administrator, William J. Stark, even though Mr. Stark was the unanimous choice of a search committee of parents, students, alumni, faculty and union representatives.

Mr. Levy directed the search committee to find new candidates, saying he wanted to improve Bronx Science's reputation by picking a more impressive name — perhaps even a Nobel Prize-winning scientist.

The chancellor's resistance angered many of the school's teachers and alumni, who complained that he was being high-handed and demonstrating a lack of knowledge about running high schools. In particular, they questioned whether a research scientist would have the administrative skills that the job requires.

Mr. Levy's news release yesterday said he was announcing the appointment of Mr. Stark as interim principal. But that action seemed to confuse some school officials, since Mr. Stark has been acting as the principal since September. Mr. Levy is out of the country on vacation this week and could not be reached for comment. Margie Feinberg, a spokeswoman, said Mr. Levy was making the interim appointment official.

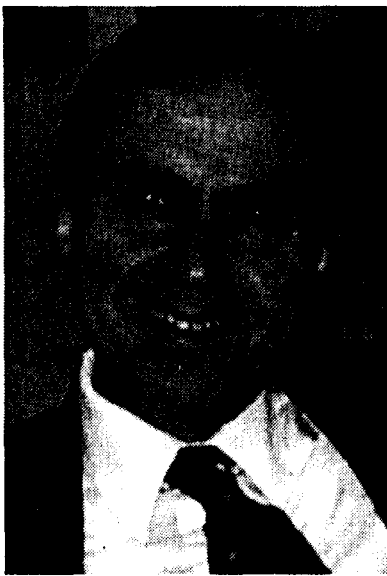
Rose DePinto, the superintendent of high schools, said that the visiting committee's duties would not include finding a new principal. The search for a principal will continue over the next few months, she said, adding that Mr. Stark was not necessarily out of the running. "Whoever is interested will apply for the job and be considered," Ms. DePinto said.

Mr. Levy said in the news release that he wanted the committee of five Nobel laureates — who include two Bronx Science graduates — to review the school's curriculum and "ensure that it remains consistent with current educational practice, reflects the full rigor of the sciences and is fully preparatory for college."

He also said that the committee would speak to the school's teachers and administrators and determine whether "the staffing and organization structures in fact promote the most effective delivery of instruction." Ms. DePinto said that the committee would specifically evaluate continued training for teachers and administrators and, if necessary, recommend improvements.

The committee will be headed by Joshua Lederberg, a professor emeritus at Rockefeller University who was a Nobel laureate in 1958. The other members are Sheldon L. Glashow, a 1979 Nobel laureate and a physics professor at Boston University; Roald Hoffman, a 1981 Nobel laureate and a chemistry professor at Cornell University; Leon M. Lederman, a 1988 Nobel laureate and a professor emeritus at the University of Chicago; and Steven Weinberg, a 1979 Nobel laureate and a professor of physics and astronomy at the University of Texas in Austin.

Dr. Glashow and Dr. Weinberg were classmates at Bronx Science and went on to win the Nobel Prize together. Dr. Lederman attended James Monroe High School in the Bronx, and Dr. Hoffman and Dr. Lederberg attended Stuyvesant High School in Manhattan.



The appointment of William J. Stark as principal was blocked.

### A 'visiting committee' for a prestigious school.

Mr. Levy said in the release that the committee might eventually conduct similar reviews of Stuyvesant and Brooklyn Technical High School, the city's two other prestigious science schools. The committee's first meeting is scheduled for Jan. 8.

Bronx Science's last principal, Stanley Blumenstein, announced his retirement in the fall of 1999. After advertising the job opening, a so-called C-30 committee, prescribed by the chancellor's regulations, interviewed more than 20 candidates and sent five names in ranked order to the Bronx superintendent of high schools, Norman Wechsler. Members of the committee have said that Mr. Stark was their unanimous first choice.

Mr. Wechsler sent two of the names, including Mr. Stark's, to Mr. Levy. But the chancellor rejected both finalists last summer, instructing the committee to start over.

Milton Kopelman, the principal at Bronx Science from 1977 to 1990, said yesterday that the Nobel laureates probably could not provide administrative guidance. But he said that they might provide valuable insights regarding the school's curriculum and especially its research program.

Bronx Science has had more finalists than any other school in the Intel Science Talent Search, formerly known as the Westinghouse Science Talent Search, but in recent years the school's number of finalists has dwindled.